

VZCZCXRO6773
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH RUEHTRO
DE RUEHGO #0415 1480911
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 270911Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7664
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1228
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4772
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8316
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5878
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1618
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1671
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000415

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT DECLARES CONSTITUTION APPROVED; ASSK
SUPPORTERS ARRESTED

Classified By: Poloff Chelsia C. Wheeler for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (SBU) State-run media reported today that Burma's new constitution had been approved by 92.4 percent in the nation-wide referendum that concluded May 24. Voters we spoke with reported wide-spread election irregularities including distribution of pre-marked ballots with the approval mark checked on them; people being allowed to vote multiple times for family members; polling booth workers instructing confused or illiterate voters to fill out their ballots indicating a "yes" vote; voters appearing to vote advised advised that their votes had already been recorded; and ballot boxes being forwarded to central election commission officials without being counted in front of ten neutral witnesses as required by the referendum law.

¶2. (SBU) Additionally, NLD Spokesman U Nyan Win confirmed that plain-clothes police detained 15-20 supporters of Aung San Suu Kyi, including NLD members, while they marched from NLD headquarters to her home on May 27. He did not have the names of the detainees or where they had been taken. The march began at the NLD headquarters where a ceremony was held today commemorating the NLD victory in the 1990 elections.

¶3. (SBU) Aung San Suu Kyi has been under house arrest since May 2003, in addition to her previous periods of detention. Her term officially expired on May 25, but the GOB has made no indication that it will release her, according to U Nyan Win. Security around her home was increased this morning with extra barricades visible and Swan-ar-Shin thugs deployed around the area. Security was stepped up even further after the regime arrested the demonstrators.

¶4. (C) Comment: While Cyclone Nargis appeared to temporarily disrupt the regime's political thugs and Special Branch Police, they are now back to business as usual. The politically charged anniversaries of ASSK's house arrest, the May 30 attack on her at Depayin, and her June 19 birthday, will refocus attention on the Than Shwe regime's sham roadmap and its determination to crush all political dissent. We agree that assistance to the victims of Cyclone Nargis should not be politicized. However, we can comment separately on Than Shwe's continued defiance of the international community's demands for a political dialogue leading to national reconciliation and the release of all political prisoners. With international attention focused on relief

efforts, we do not expect much comment on the referendum
outcome outside of Burma. End comment.
VILLAROSA